

BAR LEADERS MEET WITH LEGISLATORS

State Bar President John Van de Kamp and Executive Director Judy Johnson met with more than 30 members of the Legislature, including virtually all lawyer-lawmakers and legislative leadership, as well as key legislative and gubernatorial staffers over three days last week. Van de Kamp and Johnson were accompanied in the visits by Director of Governmental Affairs Anthony Williams, Chief Legislative Counsel Larry Doyle, and lobbyist Michael Corbett.

The purpose of the meetings was to introduce the lawmakers and staff to the new State Bar President, to identify any concerns they might have with the Bar, and to discuss the Bar's legislative interests and objectives for the coming year. Williams described the meetings as "extremely positive."

NEW JUDICIARY COMMITTEES APPOINTED

Both the Senate and Assembly announced the appointment of standing committees for 2005 last week. As expected, the Senate Judiciary Committee was relatively unchanged from last year (with one somewhat surprising exception), while its Assembly counterpart has been substantially re-constituted.

The seven-member Senate Judiciary Committee maintains the longstanding 5-2 Democratic dominance, with five lawyer members and one law school graduate. Democratic members of the committee are Chairman [Joe Dunn](#) of Santa Ana, [Gil Cedillo](#) of Los Angeles, [Martha Escutia](#) of Whittier, [Liz Figueroa](#) of Sunol, and [Sheila Kuehl](#) of Santa Monica. Dunn, Escutia and Kuehl are attorneys, and Cedillo is a law school graduate. Figueroa, the only new member of the panel with the exception of Dunn, replaces attorney [Denise Ducheny](#) of San Diego on the Judiciary panel.

The Republican members of the Judiciary Committee are the same as last year. Both Vice-Chair [Bill Morrow](#) of Oceanside and [Dick Ackerman](#) of Irvine are attorneys, and Ackerman is the Senate's Republican leader.

The Assembly Judiciary Committee has been reduced from 11 to nine members, with six Democrats and three Republicans. Unlike its Senate counterpart, lawyers are a 5-4 minority on the panel.

The Democratic members of the Assembly Judiciary Committee are Chair [Dave Jones](#) of Sacramento, [Noreen Evans](#) of Santa Rosa, [John Laird](#) of Santa Cruz, [Lloyd Levine](#) of Van Nuys, [Sally Lieber](#) of Mountain View, and [Cindy Montanez](#) of San Fernando. Only Jones and Evans, both first-term lawmakers, are attorneys, while the remaining four are returning members of the panel.

The Republican members of the committee are returning Vice-Chair [Tom Harman](#) of Huntington Beach, [Ray Haynes](#) of Murrieta, and [Tim Leslie](#) of Roseville. Harman and Haynes are attorneys, and Haynes and Leslie are former Senators who are finishing their second tour of duty in the Assembly this term. Although neither served on the Judiciary panel last session, both Haynes and Leslie have been members of both the Assembly and Senate Judiciary Committees in the past.

COURT BUDGET PROPOSED

On Wednesday, January 10, Governor Schwarzenegger released his proposed [budget](#) for 2005-06.

The budget for the state's [Judicial Branch](#) includes \$1.9 billion in general fund expenditures, an increase of \$164.5 million over the current year. This increase includes an additional \$97.4 million for growth in operational costs for the trial courts and represents the first year in which the trial courts receive the automatic increase under the state appropriation limit (SAL). [While SAL is applied to the trial courts for the first time this year, other areas of the judicial budget will be put under SAL starting 2007-08.]

The proposed budget also includes an additional \$92.6 million per year, beginning next year, for mandatory costs such as security, salaries and benefits, retirement costs, and county-provided services.

There are several issues that remain to be discussed throughout the budget process, including the need for additional judges, the level of judicial pay, and court facilities.

DEADLINES UPCOMING

- [Friday, January 21](#) – Last day to submit bill requests to the Office of Legislative Counsel.
- [Friday, February 18](#) – Last day for bills to be introduced (with limited exceptions – e.g., urgency measures and committee bills).